

REMARKS

Claims Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 15, 20-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written restriction requirement.

For clarification, Applicants withdraw their Statement on page 7 of the Response dated September 17, 2003 stating "Claims are clearly directed to rubbers which are not in the latex form." It appears at certain points during the pending prosecution, Applicants inadvertently used the terms "liquid rubber" and "latex rubber" interchangeably.

To clear the record, Applicants submit Components A and B can be solid rubber components or rubber latex as disclosed throughout the Specification and specifically at page 10, line 22 through page 11, line 2.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that due to the withdrawal of the inadvertent, inconsistent statement regarding Component A, the Specification and Claims now comply with the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Additional Remarks

For additional clarification, Applicants submit that one skilled in the art understands, "latex rubber" to include **a dispersion of rubber particles in water**. The aqueous dispersion characterized by the solids content, the mean particle diameter, the particle size distribution, the nature of the rubber particles, etc. As latices are aqueous dispersions, they exhibit low viscosities comparable with the viscosity of liquids. Due to these low viscosities latices can be easily processed. It has to be noted that the viscosity of latices is not governed by the molecular weight of the dispersed rubber, but by factors such as the solid contents and the particle size.

A "liquid rubber" contain neither water or solvent. **A liquid rubber consists of 100% rubber**. A liquid rubber is characterized by its low molar mass, which is in the range 5,000 - 50,000 g/mol, more specifically 5,000 - 20,000 g/mol. Due to these low viscosities, liquid rubbers exhibit viscosities comparable with those of honey and pitch. Liquid rubbers are considered to be easily processed.

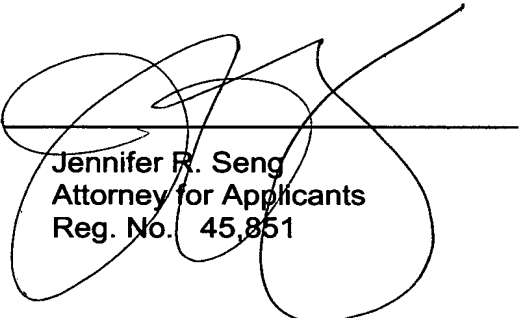
Typical "solid rubbers" exhibit molar masses > 50,000 g/mol preferably > 100,000 g/mol. These rubbers cannot be processed like liquids. They are more similar with solids (at the first glance). In order to process these solid rubbers, heavy machinery is required.

Accordingly, based on the above, Applicants submit that component A of the present invention is properly understood to include a "latex rubber" and a "solid rubber" not a "liquid rubber" as defined in the documents previously cited against the Applicants.

Further, Applicants submit that the cited references do not merely teach a rubber in a liquid form, but rather teach liquid rubber components, which consists of 100% liquid rubber, not a rubber latex or solid rubber.

Respectfully submitted,

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